End Sought For Nixon Foundation

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By Howard Seelye
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LOS ANGELES—Eight trustees of the Richard Nixon Foundation have recommended that the foundation be dissolved and that its assets be turned over to Whittier College.

Those supporting the recommendation believe there is little chance that the foundation can achieve its original goal—creation of a Nixon library and museum.

Among the trustees calling for dissolution are Leonard Firestone, president, Jack Drown, treasurer, Patricia Reilly Hitt, vice chairman of the board of executive trustees and trustees Earl Adams, Robert Finch, Clinton Harris, Hubert Perry and Taft Schreiber.

To close out foundation operations, at least 13 members of the 25-member board must agree.

Mrs. Hitt, of Laguna Beach, proposed dissolving the foundation last week in a letter to foundation trustees. She served in the Nixon administration as an assistant secretary of health, education and welfare.

She outlined the original mission of the nonprofit foundation as "undertaking the creation and perpetuation of a presidential library and museum for the collection and study of papers and memorabilia of the 37th President of the United States."

But, she said, "the prospects for being able to carry out that mission in the foreseeable future are unfortunately clouded at this time."

She said the foundation had not engaged in fund raising, had not selected a site and had not adopted a design or concept for such a library and museum.

The foundation, which Mrs. Hitt said, "has been in a quiescent state for a considerable period of time," required funds for studies, surveys, supplies, office space, equipment, travel expenses and advisory services to the oral history

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project conducted from 1971 to 1973 by Whittier College in California.

As a resutl, the foundation's assets consist only of materials and studies developed by the oral history project and a few other items, such as furniture, files and records.

The oral history consists of interviews with relatives and long-time friends of the former President, and is understood to cover the first 30 years of his life. None of the assets of the foundation include materials from the Nixon presidency.

At a Whittier College trustees meeting on Dec. 2 a resolution was adopted indicating willingness of the college to accept and administer the foundation assets.

Four members of the Nixon Foundation board also serve as trustees of the college. They are Mrs. Hitt, Harris, Perry and Donald M. Kendall.

Three foundation trustees are on trial in Washington for matters relating to the Watergate cover-up. They are John D. Ehrlichman, H. R. (Bob) Haldeman and John N. Mitchell. A fourth, Herbert W. Kalmbach, is serving a sentence at the Federal Correctional Institution at Lompic, Calif., for collecting illegal campaign contributions.

Technically, Nixon has no legal role in deciding the future of the foundation, but The Times has learned that the former President has been consulted and has expressed no objection to dissolving the foundation.

Those closely associated with the foundation made it clear that a move to dissolve the foundation would not have been made if Nixon objected.

Mrs. Hitt sent each trustee a resolution to sign and return if they favor closing foundation operations.